

THE Unexplained

MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

The Alaise mystery
Who are the stigmatics?
Pyramid power assessed
Welsh triangle-the facts
The legend of Fulcanelli

44



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MYSTERIES OF MIND SPACE & TIME

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Contents

Lines of Alaise

'THE CRADLE OF ALL OUR SCIENCE'

Evidence that a sleepy French village is the centre of a prehistoric navigational system

Elizabeth Watkins

861

Stigmatics

WHO ARE THE STIGMATICS?

We examine the claim that those who bear the wounds of Christ are divinely inspired

Bob Rickard

866

Mysteries of Egypt

THE POWER OF THE PYRAMIDS

Were the pyramids really designed as tombs for the pharaohs – or was there a more mysterious purpose?

Humphrey Evans

869

Dyfed enigma

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WELSH TRIANGLE

In an exclusive investigation, we reassess the reports of the Welsh UFO sightings of 1977

Hilary Evans

874

Fulcanelli

TRANSFORMATION OF AN ALCHEMIST

Is there any substance in the rumour that Fulcanelli attained the secret of eternal youth?

Kenneth Rayner Johnson

878

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In next week's issue

In **UFO Casebook** we describe reports of a strange blue glow in the sky and a high-pitched humming that frightened several witnesses in Langenhoe and Felixstowe, deep in rural England. We examine the possibility that the **Lines of Alaise** are evidence of the existence of an advanced prehistoric culture spread throughout Europe. And in another look at **Timeslips** we describe how two Edwardian ladies decided to enliven their Parisian holiday by visiting the Palace of Versailles – and got more than they bargained for! Mediums, mystics and physicists all seem to be reaching the same conclusions about the nature of reality – find out why in **Physics and psi**. And on a note of mystery and high adventure we begin a brand new series about the attempt to excavate the treasure of the **Oak Island Money Pit**.

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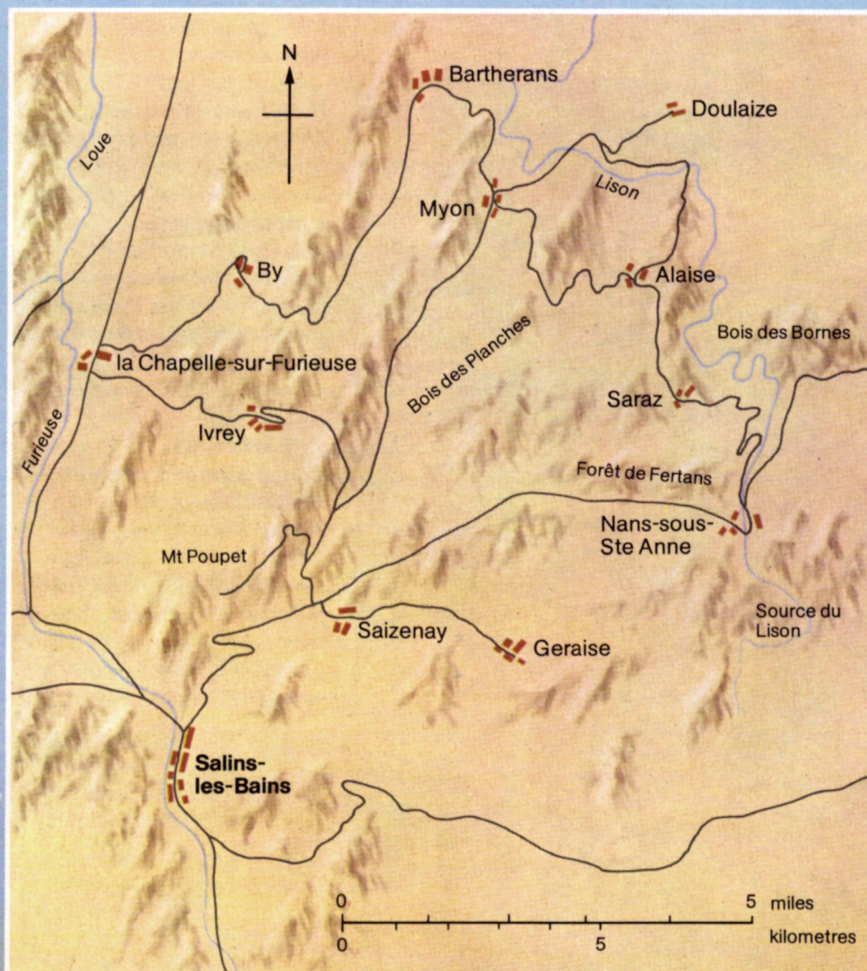
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'The cradle of all our science'

Radiating from an obscure village in eastern France is an invisible network of lines connecting places with similar names throughout Europe. ELIZABETH WATKINS explores its purpose and significance

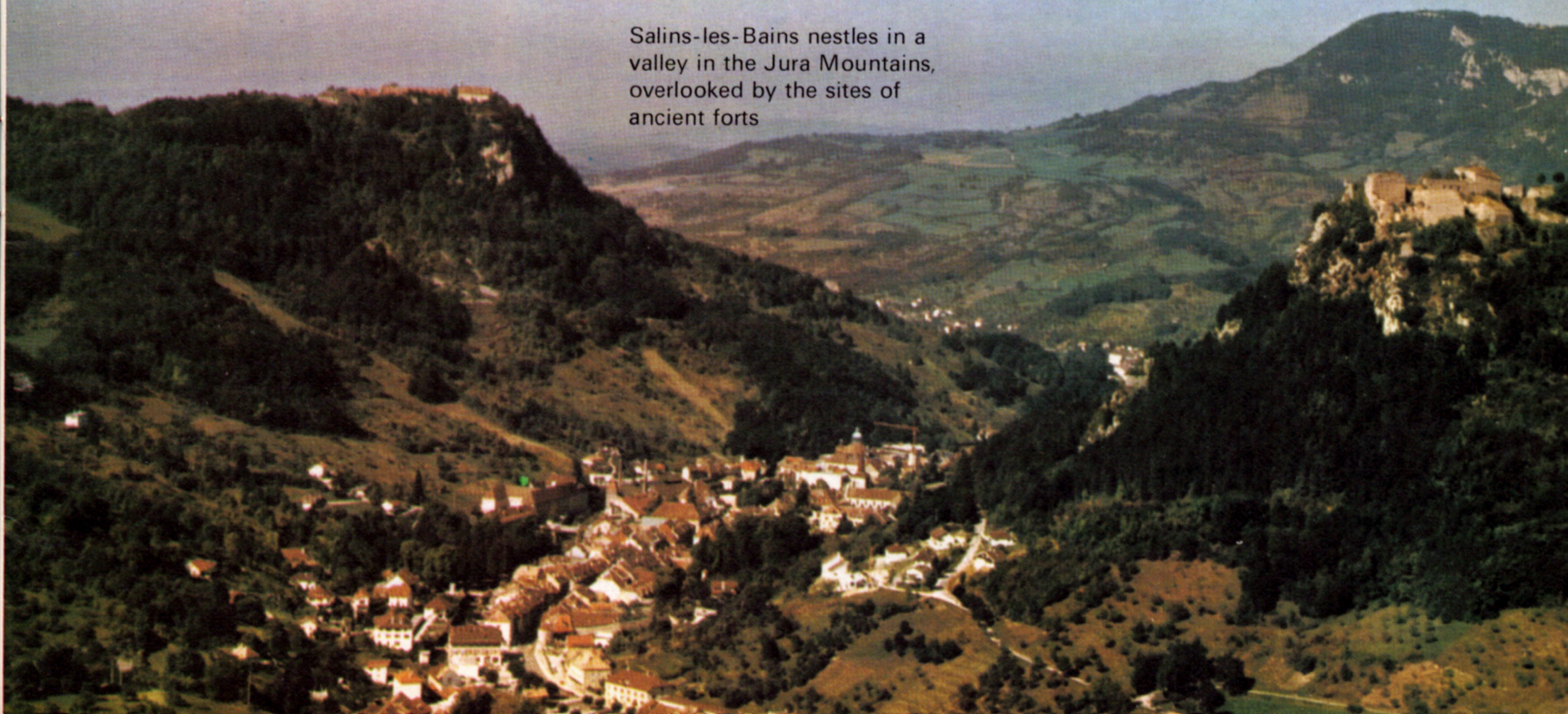


TUCKED AWAY IN THE FOLDS of the Jura Mountains in eastern France, not far from the Swiss border, lies the little town of Salins-les-Bains. As the traveller approaches from the south, the road appears to be entering a cul-de-sac, so steeply do the cliffs rise on either side, each topped by a tumble of ancient fortresses. Straight ahead, to the north, stands Mont Poupet, at the head of a lion-shaped ridge. Salins-les-Bains stretches along a fast-flowing stream, the Furieuse, and straggles half-heartedly up the steep cliff-sides.

The tourist office stands in the magnificent 18th-century square. Its staff will proudly relate the history of the area. In the Middle Ages salt was synonymous with wealth, and the Chalon family exploited the salt of the mineral springs from which the town takes its name, using the wealth to develop the famous wine cellars at Beaune. No mention whatever is made of an earlier history of which there are so many proofs: the dozens of ancient tombs clustered on Mont Poupet; the many menhirs (four have been destroyed in the last 20 years alone); or even of the claim of nearby Alaise to be *the* Alaise, where Julius Caesar finally defeated Vercingetorix, the French equivalent of Boadicea. Still less is there any mention of the far more radical claims made for Alaise in 1935 by a Frenchman called Xavier Guichard: that the small area immediately north of Salins is the cradle of all our 20th-century science – the place where the Earth was first measured, geography was first recorded, and mathematics was developed to an advanced level.

Alaise is a sleepy village some 9 miles (15 kilometres) north of Mont Poupet. The present village lies well to the west of the

Salins-les-Bains nestles in a valley in the Jura Mountains, overlooked by the sites of ancient forts





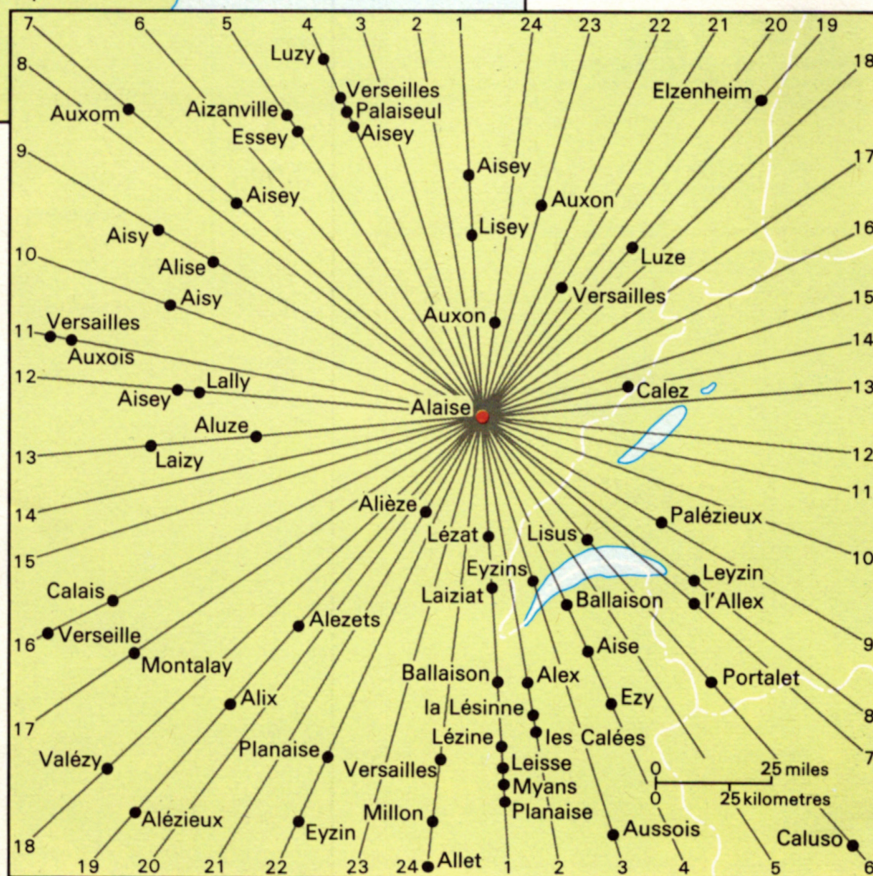
Left: the system of 24 'rhumb lines' that Xavier Guichard believed he had discovered. They span Europe from Britain to Greece and from Portugal to Germany, linking places with ancient names that he, as a philologist, believed were derived from the name Alaise. The lines radiate from Mont Poupet, near Alaise (below)

Right: one of the lines, charted in detail. Line 5 runs from Carlisle, near the Scottish border, to Aliso in Corsica. English names in italic type, such as *Walesby*, were not included by Guichard on his maps, but have been added here to suggest, tentatively, a possible relationship to Alaise

Below right: a chart of the Mediterranean, drawn on a single piece of vellum in 1626. It uses a wind-rose system reminiscent of the prehistoric grid described by Guichard. A course to any port could be sailed along suitable rhumb lines

ancient Gallic town, Alesia, that stretched along the heights above the River Lison. About 3 miles (5 kilometres) still further to the west lies the village of Myon, directly north of Mont Poupet. On the highest point of Mont Poupet is a belvedere or look-out. Although only 2500 feet (800 metres) above sea level, it has one of the finest panoramic views in the whole of Europe. To the east and south-east the distant Alps can be seen, sweeping south in a great semi-circle. Even from 150 miles (250 kilometres) Mont Blanc stands out from its white-clad entourage. Comparatively near at hand, the pass that leads up from the Lake of Geneva to the Jura, the Col de Faucille, can be seen. To the west great plains stretch to the gentler hills of Beaujolais and Burgundy.

Mont Poupet, Myon, Alaise – Guichard spent a lifetime demonstrating that each of these places in turn was the centre of a direction-finding system, dividing Europe with invisible lines much as we divide it by latitude and longitude today. But since the ancients had no maps and used no writing, he believed that they marked their knowledge

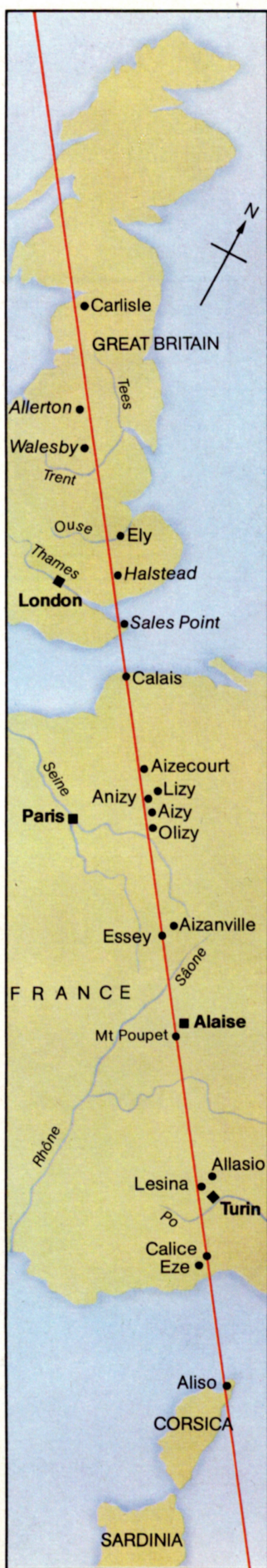
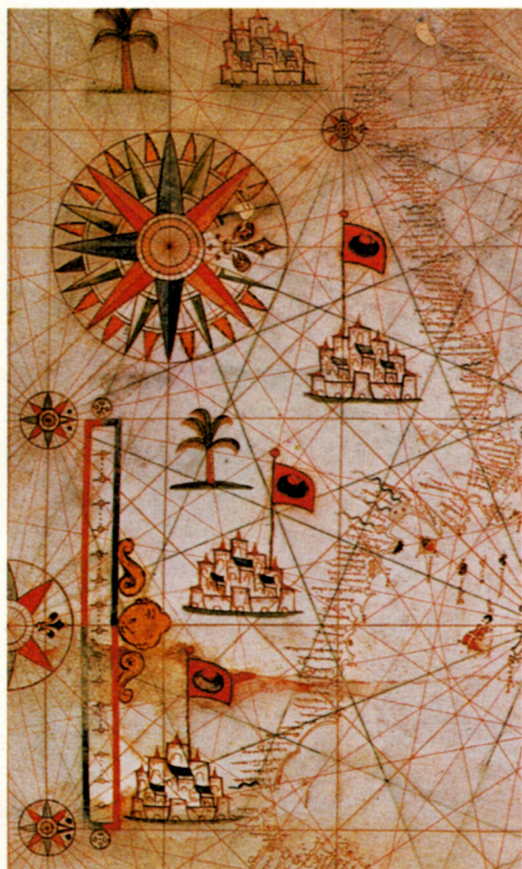


on the earth itself, just as we mark our boundaries today. These markers were places selected for their topographical features.

It was through philological studies that Guichard came to his study of prehistoric geography. The diffusionist theory of archaeology, which states that all knowledge and all civilisation was brought to Europe from the Middle East via Greece and Rome, did not fit the facts, according to his own researches into ancient European languages. The knowledge symbolised by the words and word-roots that he discovered, common to all European languages before they were Latinised, was far too sophisticated for a Europe supposedly inhabited by a scattering of warring, disparate tribes. There must have been a homogeneous culture based on considerable scientific knowledge, with widely spread religious beliefs and burial customs. Of course, this culture may have been disturbed by barbarian invasion even before the Romans arrived.

As a philologist, Guichard was well-read in the classics, which he combed for suitable references to ancient geography. But one of the authors he found most useful was Gosselin, a Frenchman who in 1786 won a prize for his comparison of the geographies of two Greek thinkers, Strabo and Ptolemy, who lived in the first and second centuries AD, respectively. Gosselin came to the conclusion that

in most of the geodetic measurements transmitted by the ancients can be



detected the vestiges of an astronomic science well perfected. The epoch during which the great work of fixing these measurements was performed is unknown. It appears that even in the time of Alexander the Great the memory survived only in a very vague tradition.

Guichard started by selecting three place-names used universally in Europe: Bourg, Antia, and Alaise. Bourg has been used since prehistoric times as a suffix in the names of human settlements; but it has been used in historic times as well, so Guichard discarded it. Antia occurs in such names as Florentia and Valentia, the ancient names of Florence and Valence (a town in south-eastern France). It has been used less often than Bourg in modern times, but the Greeks sometimes used it, so he discarded that, too.

An ancient name

Alaise had the qualities for which he was searching: widely used, very ancient, and yet showing no sign of having been used in historic times. Guichard found 382 place-names derived from Alaise, with a further 47 based on Calais (Cales, Calis, and so on); 37 were related to Versailles, Veiseille, Verceil, and so on. He found another group, nothing like so numerous, based on the words Myon, Millons, Milliers, Meilen or similar names. He stressed that Alaise is the ancient European form of the Greek Eleusis, and both came from the word 'hal', meaning salt.

When he marked places with these names on a map, Guichard arrived at some astonishing conclusions. Firstly, nearly all the places with names related to Alaise were situated on a wind-rose system based on the Alaise in Doubs. A wind-rose is the ancient way of describing a direction, dating from before the invention of latitude and longitude. Right up to the 17th century maps were drawn on this system. The rose was centred on some chosen point, while 'rhumb lines' led out from this fixed point in given directions. The compass was usually divided so that there were 16 or 32 rhumb lines. It was thus possible to describe a certain place as so many days' journey on such a line from the agreed centre.

Alaise is situated in the heart of Europe: lines running down from Scotland into Italy and across from Portugal into Poland cross here. Guichard believed that he could recognise 24 such direction-finding lines crossing at Mont Poupet, giving 48 rhumb lines to the rose. Guichard apparently overlooked the significance of the number of lines he found: one for each half-hour of the day and night. The interval between them should be $7\frac{1}{2}^\circ$, but in fact is not regular. It varies between 6° and 8° , except between the seventh, eighth, and ninth lines, where the variations are still greater. Guichard thought these distortions had been made intentionally to give straight lines running down into Italy.

One line runs through Carlisle and Ely in

Lines of Alaise

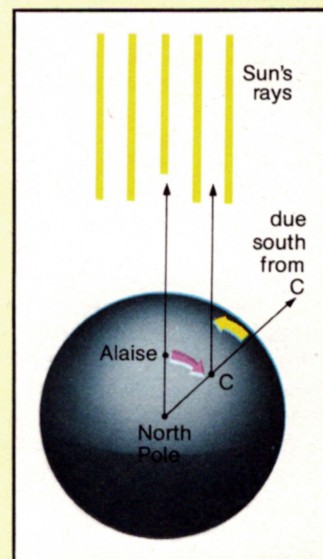
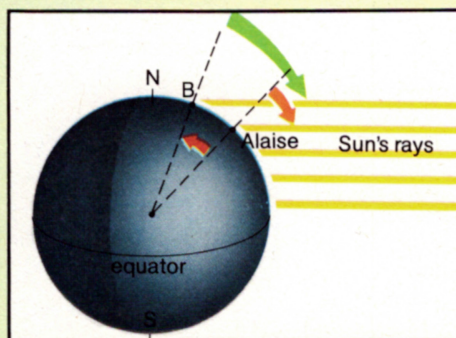
England, through Calais and eight other Alaise derivatives in France, to Aliso in Corsica. Another goes from Arklow in Ireland through another Calais, seven other places in France with Alaisian names, and four Italian ones (Vercelli, Alzano, Calesi, Cales). This line runs very close to Salisbury, but Guichard overlooks many British names. Another line runs from Aligo in Portugal, through Alija in Spain and four French Alaise derivatives to Elsendorf in Germany and Kalisch in Poland. Yet another runs from Alesanco in Spain through five French Alaises to Arlesheim in Germany.

A second system discovered by Guichard was based on solstitial lines, the directions of sunrise and sunset at midwinter and midsummer. It was centred on Myon, to the west of Alaise.

Although the panoramic outlook from Mont Poupet is remarkable, it does not give an unobstructed view of the horizon all round the compass, and the summer sunset line is masked. In Myon there is a low hill from which the solstitial sunrises and sunsets

Surveying by the stars

Prehistoric geographers could have determined latitudes and longitudes by observations of the stars, Moon or Sun. The difference in latitude between Alaise and B, for example (below), is the angle marked in red. It could be found by measuring the angle between the



can be freely observed, although the view to the south is blocked by Mont Poupet itself.

It was at Myon that Guichard made an even more surprising discovery. Each place with a name derived from Alaise was found to be a multiple of 10 Greek stades from this central Myon. In ancient Greece six units of length, all called the stade, were in current use. The stade that Guichard selected as fitting his system was equivalent to 1.15 miles (1.85 kilometres). In all, Guichard found 90 places at distances from Myon that were significant in terms of this unit. They included Alija in Spain (at 580 stades), Alijo and Milheros in Portugal (680 and 720 stades), and Caliso in Italy (500 stades). He

Above: from a hill near the tiny village of Myon, prehistoric geographers observed the rising and setting of the Sun at midwinter and midsummer, according to Guichard

Right: present-day Alaise is a tiny village some distance from the site of the prehistoric Alesia, a hill settlement on which the most ancient of the geographical systems found by Guichard was centred



vertical and the noon Sun at Alaise (orange) and at B (green), on the same day. Subtracting one angle from the other gives the difference in latitude.

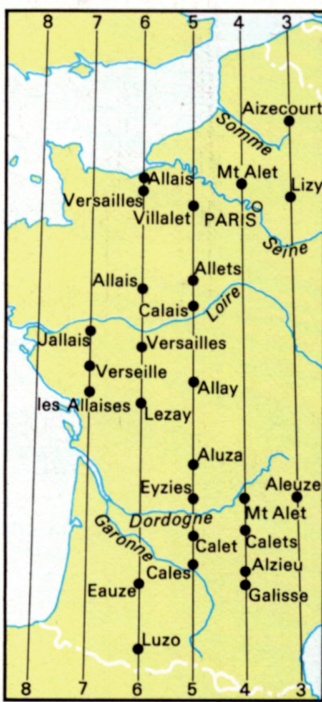
Longitude measurements (left) also required simultaneous observations at widely separated places. The difference in longitude between Alaise and C is the angle marked in purple. When it is noon at Alaise, the Sun is due south. At C the angle between the Sun and the local direction of south (yellow) equals this difference in longitude. The difficulty is to know the exact moment at which to make the measurement at C. Beacon fires could have been used to synchronise the observations. Or the measurements could have been made at the time of eclipses of the Sun, which are seen everywhere in the daylight hemisphere of the Earth virtually simultaneously. But co-ordination over a vast area would have been needed.

was surprised to find that Meilen, which is in Switzerland, was situated too far away from Myon to make the 110 stades he expected – and then a Neolithic settlement was discovered under the waters of Lake Zürich, lying at exactly the correct distance. The very few Alaisian names that did not fit into the wind-rose system were all found to be precisely positioned in terms of stades.

So we have a picture of ancient Man mapping his immediate surroundings from an excellent look-out site in eastern France, using place-names to notate lines that extended in all directions. From now on, Man becomes aware of the importance of using solstitial lines, and moves his observatory a

Below: part of a system of longitudes discovered by Guichard in the positioning of ancient settlements. It extended beyond the area shown, eastward to Greece and westward to Spain

Bottom: place-names related to Alaise also fall on parallels of latitude, Guichard claimed



short distance to the north, whence the solstices can be more clearly observed. It is at this stage that Man starts to make accurate astronomical observations.

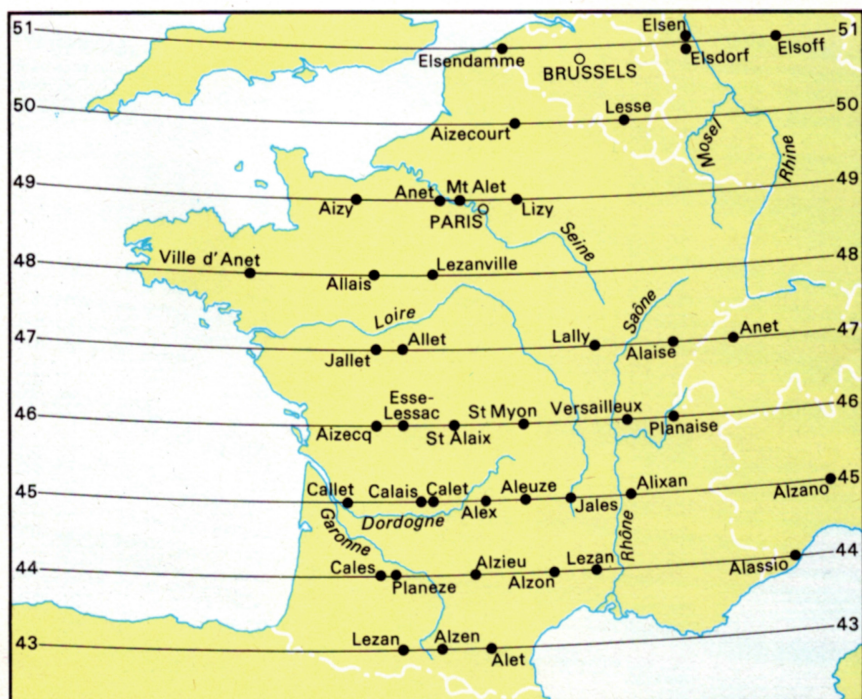
Yet even an astronomically based wind-rose map has its shortcomings. The further you move from the centre, the wider the spaces between the spokes, and the more difficult it becomes to express a position accurately. Guichard believed that the final developments in measuring the Earth, the introduction of latitude and longitude, also took place in Alaise, and that Alaise itself was on the first standard meridian. This invention is usually attributed to the Greeks, who placed the standard meridian first through the island of Rhodes, and later moved it to the far west, the Fortunate Isles (the Canaries and Madeira). Ptolemy is credited with measuring longitude for the first time in an experiment conducted at the time of the equinox, at Aswan in Egypt. But its accurate determination remained a problem until the invention of accurate chronometers some 1500 years later. Guichard's reconstructed lines of longitude, based on Alaise, are slightly less than one degree apart, an error that he attributed to the immense difficulties the ancients experienced in measuring.

Other searchers

Guichard was apparently unaware of his two contemporaries, Alfred Watkins in England and Wilhelm Teudt in Germany. All three men started from very different premises, yet reached much the same conclusions. Francis Hitching, the writer and student of the paranormal, makes an interesting comparison between Watkins and Guichard: both were convinced that their countries were criss-crossed with alignments, both based the alignments on place-names, and both were convinced that the alignments had come into being because of the importance of salt at these places. Alfred Watkins derived the name 'ley' or 'leigh' from place-names: Hitching asks whether this could be the English way of saying 'Alaise'.

The sad thing about Guichard's closely reasoned, scholarly, well-documented work is the extent to which it has been ignored. No publisher would look at it in the 1930s, and it was eventually published privately, by his friends. Yet later developments have made his work more relevant than ever. We know from the studies of Professor Alexander Thom of Oxford and others on Neolithic sites in Great Britain that sophisticated mathematics was in use in northern Europe at least a millennium before Pythagoras. It is now accepted that the alignments of Carnac in Brittany are older than those of Karnak in Egypt. What was the origin of the knowledge that went into their building?

On page 886: why the ancient Europeans created their far-reaching grid system



Who are the stigmatics?



What causes the physical phenomena of stigmata? Is it, as many Christians believe, the result of meditation on Christ's sufferings by a saintly person? Or is it a clinical condition, a form of hysteria? BOB RICKARD concludes his investigation

THE CURIOUS PHENOMENON of stigmata – the mysterious appearance of wounds resembling, as far as one can tell, those suffered by Christ during his Passion – is almost exclusively found among members of the Roman Catholic Church. Its records, therefore, contain the essential information for a researcher in this field. Yet the Church cannot be said to be objective about the phenomenon, for it allows for 'divine' and 'diabolical' stigmata, depending in theory on the saintliness or otherwise of the individual stigmatic. Although in practice the dividing line may frequently have been drawn for political reasons, one criterion was consistently applied: stigmatics who exploited their wounds for fame or wealth were demonstrably 'diabolical'.

If ostentatious display is a factor in determining the 'divine' or 'diabolical' origin of stigmata, then the case of Elizabeth of Herkenrode should have been damned long ago. This 13th-century nun spent most of her life in almost continual trance, enacting the whole of the Passion each 24 hours, often portraying Christ and several of his tormentors by turns. Father Thurston, the Roman



Catholic historian, describes a scene, drawing on contemporary accounts:

Catching hold of the bosom of her own dress with her right hand she would pull herself to the right and then with the left hand she would drag herself in the opposite direction. At another time, stretching out her arm and raising her fist threateningly, she would strike herself a violent blow on the jaw so that her whole body seemed to reel and totter under the impact.

She was, apparently, dramatising scenes and actions experienced in her visions, and at the

Far left: Georges Marasco, stigmatised during Holy Week in 1923, shows the wounds in his hands and in his side

Right: 'Mortado', the music hall performer who was billed as 'the only man with marks of crucifixion'. The origin of his stigmata is obscure, but his ostentatious display of them left Roman Catholics in no doubt: he was quite simply a puppet of the Devil

Below: the English stigmatic Ethel Chapman, who died in the late 1970s, shows her hand-wounds. Every Easter for many years she felt as if nails were being driven into her palms and red holes appeared



appropriate moments the scourge marks, those of the 'crown of thorns', and the stigmata would open up on her body and gush blood.

Similarly, Domenica Lazarri (who died in 1848) and the English stigmatic Teresa Higginson (whose 'blessed death' came 50 years later) beat themselves mercilessly with their fists – Domenica's self-inflicted blows were so loud that they were heard out on the street, and Teresa believed firmly that her beatings were administered by the Devil himself. The revered mystic and stigmatic St Mary Magdalen de'Pazzi was undoubtedly motivated by the ecstatic union with God that inspired her writings, but the relish with which she exhorted her superiors to flog her and with which she whipped her novices is hardly edifying. One can sympathise with Father Thurston's perplexity as he wrote:

There are many instances of stigmatisation where imposture is out of the question but in which many of the details recorded are suggestive rather of disease than of that showing forth of

the divine attributes which we associate with the idea of a miracle.

On the other hand, there are the sceptical scientists who, without investigation, prefer to dismiss these stories and their frequently unimpeachable witnesses as subject to hoax, delusion and wishful thinking.

However, there are many who believe that the 'stigmatic complex' corresponds to certain psychoneurotic conditions, particularly that known as 'hysteria'. The major problem here arises over the popular misunderstanding of the meaning of the word. To most people – including most Catholic theologians – it conjures up an image of highly excitable neuropaths; weak-minded, pathological liars, who are given to tantrums and excessive scenes in order to get their own way. Call someone hysterical and almost inevitably it is taken as an insult.

The clinical meaning of the term is, however, quite different. Before the 20th century hysteria was believed to be exclusively a woman's complaint – the very word is Greek for 'wandering womb'. But psychiatrists dealing with the effects of extreme stress on soldiers in the trenches discovered that men can suffer from 'hysterical' symptoms too. It became clear that there is a hysterical *personality* and there are hysterical *symptoms* (which may or may not go together in the same person).

Uses of hysteria

It is the hysterical *personality* that indulges in the dramatic and exaggerated behaviour commonly associated with 'hysteria' but the *symptoms* can afflict anyone in circumstances of stress, heightened emotion or inner conflict. They may even be useful to us when we are in danger. There are many cases on record of soldiers in action who are suddenly smitten with inexplicable paralysis or blindness. Tests show that they are not malingering – the symptoms are 'real' – but the cause is discovered to be hysterical. The soldier cannot face the battle any longer but because of his training and fear of being labelled a coward he cannot give in to his fear and run away. Instead his brain resolves the conflict for him, causing his body to cease functioning as a fighting force.

There are also cases where the symptoms are revealed – under hypnosis, for example – to be literal translations of everyday sayings. 'I can't go on' has been 'translated' by the brain into hysterical lameness, 'I can't face it' into blindness, and even 'it's all a pain in the neck' into the matching physical symptom. So certain allegedly holy manifestations such as the appearance of a wedding-ring-like ridge or indentation around the appropriate finger of a nun (or 'bride of Christ') may also be seen as a form of hysteria.

Hysterical symptoms are, psychiatrists agree, not incompatible with ordinary lives nor with those of the highest sanctity. Hysteria does not 'explain away' stigmata, as

Stigmatics

many Church apologists fear, but it could well describe the mechanism of this bizarre phenomena.

Yet most Roman Catholics still regard a 'hysterical' explanation of stigmata as an insult and a blasphemy. They point out that stigmatics such as St Gemma Galgani, Padre Pio or St Teresa of Avila were humble, quiet and downright unexcitable, therefore obviously not 'hysterical'. But a closer look at the lives of these 'quiet' stigmatics reveals a history of mysterious maladies and an abnormal physical sensitivity. They were subject to a range of inexplicable illnesses including blackouts, fits, paralysis, blindness and so on. Many were victims of tuberculosis, which heightens suggestibility. And, interestingly, the visions that stigmatised them also marked the end of their many mystery illnesses.

Signs of a shaman?

Many stigmatics develop the sort of behaviour associated with the shaman (or witch doctor) of more primitive societies: going into trances, having visions, exhibiting the ability to heal, levitate, prophesy or be immune to fire. Many of them also revealed multiple personalities – among these were Teresa Higginson, Constante Mary Castreca (a 17th-century Italian nun), Mother Beatrice Mary of Jesus and Teresa Neumann – who also spoke in tongues (see page 467). It may be that stigmatics are the Catholic Church's equivalent of shamans, but even so, multiple personality is now recognised as a hysterical symptom and it may be that many of their other 'gifts', including the stigmata, have the same base.

Another clue to the hysterical foundation of stigmata comes from the component of suggestibility. The wounds of St Veronica Giuliani (who died in 1727) opened and bled at the command of her confessor, just as the Belgian stigmatic Louise Lateau and others could be recalled instantly from their highest ecstasies by the command of their superiors. The side-wound of Anne Catherine Emmerich was known to resemble the unusual Y-shaped crucifix in the church at Coesfeld in Germany where she meditated as a child. And the scourge marks of St Gemma Galgani apparently reproduced exactly those on her favourite crucifix.

This subjective element in the patterning of stigmata, and the great variety of forms it takes, would also seem to argue for a hysterical foundation. The wounds have been known to range from simple red spots to cross-shaped fissures, to round, oblong or square holes in the hands; 'nail-heads' have been on the backs of hands or in the palms and on either right or left foot, even in the soles, and the side-wounds have shown similar variations in right or left sides, according to how the stigmatic imagines Christ was crucified. Perhaps significantly, there are no known examples of wounds occurring in the



Above: Louise Lateau, the Belgian who claimed to have been stigmatised during a vision in January 1868, when she was 18. Her wounds remained visible for 15 years until her death. She was exhaustively – and often painfully – tested by many doctors during that time but her wounds remained genuinely 'miraculous'

Right: weeping blood, a rare phenomenon closely related to true stigmata and equally mysterious

wrists, the site of the wounds suggested by researchers into the Turin Shroud (see page 318). But now that this is quite common knowledge among the devout, future stigmatics could well exhibit wrist wounds.

There have been many attempts to reproduce stigmata by hypnosis but the only results have been a short-lived reddening of the skin, or sporadic bleeding. This pales in comparison to the dramatic piercings and copious bleedings of genuine stigmata, which have defied normal healing processes and stayed with the stigmatics for most of their lives. Yet it cannot be overlooked that there is a high correlation between the histories and phenomena of stigmatics and those of clinical hysteria; the difference is merely one of context and degree. Outside the religious context, where there is no 'need' for stigmata to take the form stylised by the



crucifixion of Christ, there are many kinds of paranormal and even psychological phenomena where spontaneous formations or lesions of the skin may develop. One such case was that of Eleonore Zugun, a famous poltergeist victim, studied by Harry Price in the 1920s, whose skin showed weals, bite marks and even raised lettering when she believed she was being attacked by a devil only she could see.

In many, if not all, cases of stigmata the effects seem to stem somehow from the subconscious mind of the stigmatic. If we could begin to understand the process of cause and effect involved then perhaps many more strange phenomena would be understood. But in that case the miraculous would become the mundane and for many the loss would be hard to bear.

Further reading

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Herbert Thurston, *The physical phenomena of mysticism*, Burns Oats 1952

Is there a message for us hidden in the awesome bulk of the Great Pyramid? And is it, as some writers suggest, the repository of ancient knowledge and strange powers?

HUMPHREY EVANS presents the myths – and the facts

THE PYRAMIDS OF EGYPT, and in particular the Great Pyramid of Cheops at Gîza, are such astonishing edifices, involving such prodigious amounts of labour, that there must have been some point to their construction. It hardly seems appropriate to view them as simple tombs, monuments to dead kings who had once been living gods. Surely there must be more to them than that?

Even the ancient Egyptians took to worshipping the pyramids as objects that were very nearly sacred in their own right. An inscription left by King Amenophis II, dating from about 1430 BC, just over 1000 years after the main pyramid-building era, records that he rode out to Gîza to admire the beauty of the sanctuary of Cheops and Chephren the Revered.

By the time the Arabs had followed the Greeks and the Romans as conquerors of Egypt, all sorts of legendary explanations for the building of the pyramids had been concocted. Some said that wise men had foreseen the Flood, heaven's judgement by submersion, and had erected the stone pyramids to provide the population with a refuge from the rising waters. Some said they were granaries, built to store the produce of the seven years of plenty promised in the Bible by Joseph, when he interpreted the Pharaoh's

At Gîza the pyramids brood over the Egyptian landscape. It is hard to believe that these massive constructions are no more than the tombs of kings

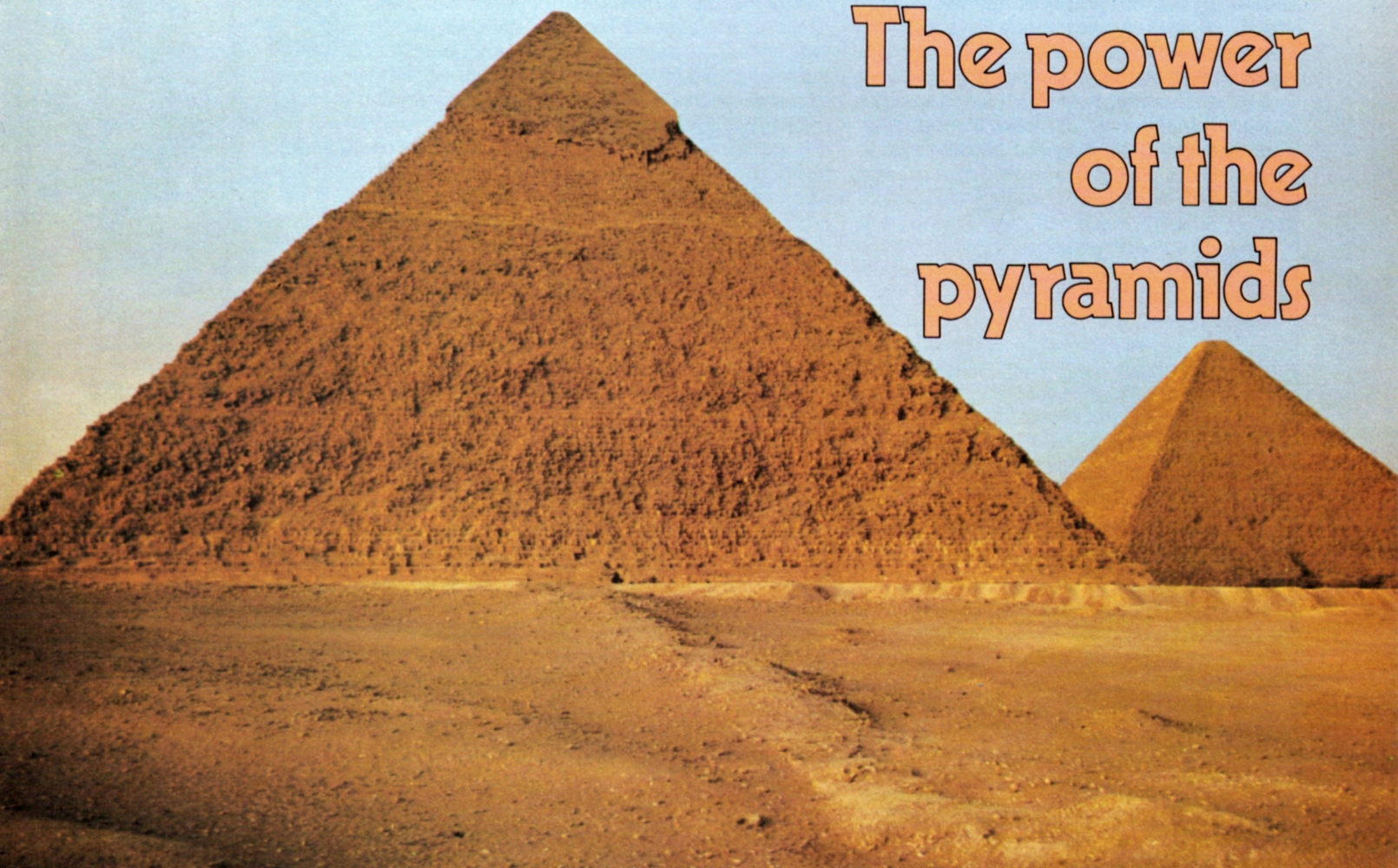
dream of seven fat cattle that were eaten up by seven lean cattle. Perhaps the latest in this long line of suggested explanations is the idea that they were built by spacemen as beacons for an interplanetary guidance system. This would account too, according to some, for the remarkable technology that raised and oriented them.

In the 19th century a growing interest in Egyptology stimulated the imagination of those theorists who felt that the ancient Egyptians had been trying to leave for later generations a message preserved in the permanence of stone. Some claimed that the pyramids were repositories of ancient wisdom; some regarded them as part of God's revelation; some looked on them as aids to magic.

One of the first was John Wilson, a British writer whose book *The lost solar system of the ancients discovered* was published in 1856. He believed that pyramids, obelisks and temples of any description symbolised, in geometrical terms, 'the laws formed by the Creator for the government of the celestial bodies'.

Next came John Taylor, who concentrated on the Great Pyramid, the largest and 'the most correct and exact in all its proportions'. He believed that the ancient Egyptians constructed the Great Pyramid in order to demonstrate certain truths in a way that would not be affected by time, neglect or wantonness. Among these truths, he revealed, was a value for the diameter of the Earth that was equal to the round number of 500 million 'English inches', or 7891 miles

The power of the pyramids



Mysteries of Egypt

(12,625.60 kilometres), which is about the actual size of the Earth's diameter.

Charles Piazzzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal for Scotland, picked up these ideas in *Our inheritance in the Great Pyramid*, which first appeared in 1864. He believed that the Great Pyramid enshrined God's fundamental standards of measurement – which he held to be the British units rather than the godless metrication of the French. He showed, to his own satisfaction, that the unit used by the builders of the Great Pyramid was derived from their knowledge of the Earth's polar axis. He called this unit the 'Pyramid inch' and calculated that it equalled 1.00099 English inches. (The English inch, in other words, was just a little on the short side.)

Piazzzi Smyth, who had not yet visited the Great Pyramid himself, took the results of those surveys that had been done, averaged and re-averaged the measurements and finally decided that originally the base must have been 763.81 feet (232.81 metres) along each side and the height 486.257 feet (148.21 metres). Using these new, super-accurate figures, Piazzzi Smyth then computed the ratio of the height of the Great Pyramid to twice its base as 1:3.14159, which, as he pointed out, is an astonishingly accurate value for π , the ratio of the diameter of a circle to its circumference. Unfortunately, it is by no means certain that this is the value that the ancient Egyptians intended to embody in the Great Pyramid. They may, for example, have set out to make the area of each face equal to that of a square with sides the same length as the height of the pyramid.

The Second Coming

Piazzzi Smyth also took up an idea suggested by another theorist, Robert Menzies, that the internal passages of the Great Pyramid, when measured in Pyramid inches, would reveal God's plan for the entire past and future of the world. He travelled to Egypt to check this for himself, and by 1880 he felt able to write that the divine preparations for the Second Coming might well be set to begin in just a few years.

A number of people have pursued this notion of the Great Pyramid as almanac and Bible in stone. John and Martin Edgar, two English brothers, reported in *The Great Pyramid passages and chambers*, published in 1910, that the Grand Gallery symbolised the Gospel Age. Following the lead of American preacher Charles Taze Russell, who founded the sect of the Jehovah's Witnesses, they predicted that in 1914 'the lease of power to the Gentile nations will terminate and Christ will take to himself his mighty power.'

David Davidson, an English engineer, followed on with *The Great Pyramid: its divine message* in 1924. Among other matters, the Great Pyramid, according to him, embodied such scientific principles as the law of gravitation. Adam Rutherford, author of the four monumental volumes of *Pyramidology*

Right: Adam Rutherford, the founder of the Institute of Pyramidology, visits the Great Pyramid on 4 February 1974 shortly before his death

Below right: an engraving from *Our inheritance in the Great Pyramid* by Charles Piazzzi Smyth, the 19th-century Astronomer Royal for Scotland. The illustration shows a procession of Egyptians carrying flaming torches up into the Grand Gallery of the Great Pyramid



and founding President of the British Institute of Pyramidology until his death in 1974, wrote: 'When the Great Pyramid is properly understood and universally studied, false religions and erroneous scientific theories will alike vanish and true religion and true science will be demonstrated to be harmonious.' As a frontispiece to the book, Adam Rutherford printed a chart of the interior of the Great Pyramid, which measured the chronology of the ages by adopting a scale of a Pyramid inch for each year. As an example: according to his scheme, he identified the back edge of the step at the top of the main passage, the Grand Gallery, as equivalent to the date 1914. From this he moved on to claim that the Millennium, the final thousand years of the reign of Christ and his Saints, was due in 1979.

Great Pyramid theorists make a number of points. The Pyramid lies very nearly on latitude 30° north, at a point exactly one third of the distance between the equator and the North Pole. It also lies close to longitude 30° east. These two lines of latitude and longitude cross more dry land than do any others, so the Great Pyramid defines the centre of the habitable world. The Great Pyramid is oriented only a fraction of a degree away from true north. Reflections of sunlight from its smoothly polished faces once provided a giant sundial and calendar. The Descending Corridor was aligned with the lowest position in the sky of the star that was the Pole Star when the Great Pyramid was built. The number five runs through all aspects of the construction in a way that could not be accidental. The length of each side in Pyramid Sacred Cubits equals the number of days in a year.

People who disagree with mystical interpretations of these matters point out that it is



pure chance that Egypt, and therefore the Great Pyramid, happen to be where they are. The accuracy of orientation is certainly technically amazing – no one has yet discovered how the Egyptians managed it – but may merely mark the rising and setting of the Sun in the east and west. Speculations about giant sundials and calendars are just speculations. At the time the Great Pyramid was built there was no star close enough to the Pole to make it likely that the Egyptians would have taken this as a reason for sloping the corridor at that particular angle. Numbers turn up in random ways in all sorts of buildings – Martin Gardner, in *Fads and fallacies*, points out that ‘fiveness’ can equally well be deduced from the dimensions of the Washington Monument in the United States’ capital. Finally, if you take enough measurements of any construction, using any kind of unit, you will be able to find apparently significant relationships.

From such speculations, however, people have gone on to incorporate the message of the Great Pyramid in an integrated spiritual system. The Church Universal and Triumphant, for example, which has centres in a number of communities in the United States, makes the Great Pyramid part of its teachings. It regards the Great Pyramid as one among many sources of revelation, an ‘outer manifestation of the inner pyramid within each person’.

Universal and triumphant

For the Church Universal and Triumphant, the Great Pyramid represents the mystery of being, of the four lower bodies, the physical, emotional, mental and etheric. The centre of the pyramid is equivalent to the heart; the top equals the third eye; and the cap-stone, which has yet to be placed on the Great Pyramid’s apex, is the all-seeing eye. Ultimately, members of the Church Universal and Triumphant work towards the point at which the inner person becomes a perfected pyramid. In 1972 Mark and Elizabeth Prophet and a number of other members of the Church went to Egypt and arranged to climb the Great Pyramid from each of its four sides. They met on the summit, at dawn, to place there an immortelle, a flower that had been immortalised by the resurrection flame that they had brought with them from Colorado Springs.

Others too have found mystery alive within the Great Pyramid. In 1903 Aleister Crowley took his first wife, Rose Edith Kelly, to spend a night in the King’s Chamber while on their honeymoon. By the light of a single candle he began reading a ‘preliminary invocation’. Soon, he wrote in his *Confessions*, the whole chamber was aglow with astral light, and he was able to snuff out the candle. The polished floor, however, made a hard bed to sleep on.

In the 1930s Paul Brunton arranged to spend a night in the Great Pyramid. He



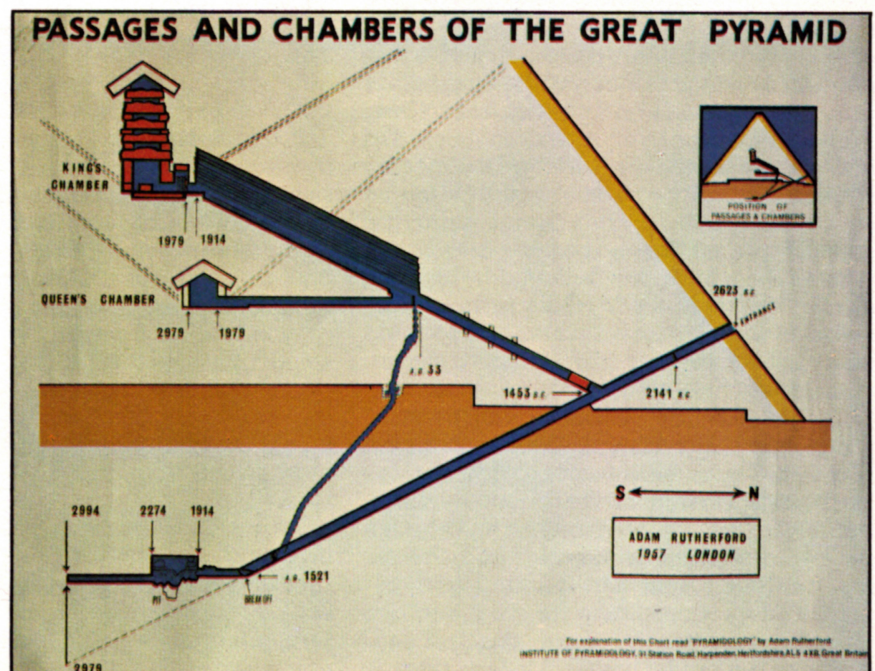
Above: occultist Aleister Crowley who, with his first wife, spent a night in the King’s Chamber in the Great Pyramid. He later claimed it had been so ‘aglow with astral light’ that he was able to read without a candle

Below: Rutherford’s diagram of the interior of the Great Pyramid, illustrating how the chronology of the ages can be measured on the basis of one ‘Pyramid inch’ for each year

fasted for three days to prepare himself, entered, was locked in, climbed the steep galleries to the King’s Chamber, sat beside the sarcophagus and put out the light. According to his own account, *A search in secret Egypt*, he became aware of ghastly elements circling about in the darkness. Then came benevolent beings, wearing the regalia of high priests of an ancient Egyptian cult, who led him on a journey through secret passages of the Pyramid that corresponded to the secret passages of the mind. When he finally came to, in inky blackness, he found that only an hour or two had passed.

Mysticism led to the belief that the pyramidal structure exerts powers of its own. A Frenchman, Antoine Bovis, an ironmonger and practitioner of radiesthesia, or divination by pendulum, was the first person to make such a claim. While visiting Egypt, he climbed into the Great Pyramid and found, strewn about the King’s Chamber, the well-preserved corpses of animals that had crept in and died. Once back in France, he built scale models of the Great Pyramid and confirmed, to his own satisfaction, that they could mummify animals. A Czechoslovakian radio engineer, Karl Drbal, took the next step. He made a cardboard model of the Great Pyramid about 6 inches (15 centimetres) high and placed within it an ordinary razor blade. The blade was supported at a point that marked one third of the distance between the base and the apex of the pyramid, at the same level as the King’s Chamber in the Great Pyramid, and both blade and pyramid were oriented north-south. Karl Drbal shaved more than a hundred times with that single blade. In 1959, after 10 years of effort, he acquired a Czechoslovakian patent for his razor-sharpening device.

The question of whether or not the cardboard pyramid had real sharpening powers



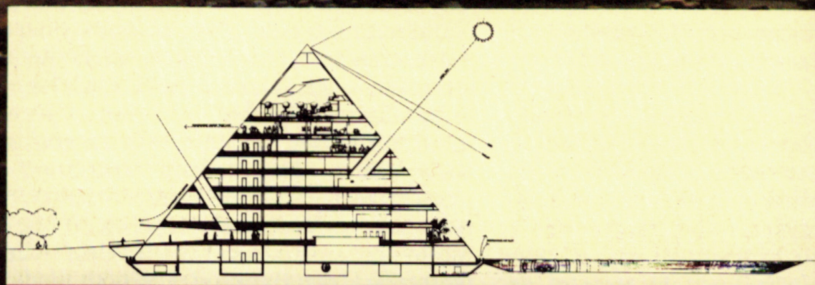
In the early 1970s Northampton County Council in Britain announced an architectural competition for its new municipal offices. First prize went to Jeremy and Fenella Dixon for a design taken straight from Cheops's Great Pyramid. They pointed out that, despite being one of the lesser-used shapes, a pyramidal structure is strong enough to survive being modified so as to incorporate windows and balconies. 'It's a sensible shape for keeping the water out. It's an economical shape, It's a hierarchical shape, with large open-plan areas at the base rising to the council chamber and chief

Pyramid on the rates

Model and cross-section of the proposed pyramid-style office block for Northampton Council

executive's offices at the top.'

They planned to set it high on its ridge-top site, aligning it, in the English landscape tradition, with ancient landmarks such as an Iron-Age hillfort. They included in their design glass and plants to make it resemble the Hanging Gardens of Babylon by day and a city of light floating in the sky by night. They even devised jokes: on the day that marked the beginning of the financial year the Sun would shine down into the accounts department. The council voted for the design, but the money ran out before the offices could be built.



is still to be investigated fully. Karl Drbal used a Blue Gillette blade in his original experiments. Unless they are cared for, these blades rust very quickly. The use he got from a single blade may have had more to do with the fact that he wiped it dry after every shave than with any power in the pyramid. On top of all that, manufacturers are well aware that most men change to a new blade long before the previous one is really exhausted. (Chris Welles, for example, an American journalist, had always started with a new blade every Monday morning. While researching an article on razors for *Esquire* magazine, he casually picked up a 10-cent 'disposable' razor and equally casually found he was still using it four weeks later.) Gillette themselves maintain that for most shavers a blade should easily last three months, or a hundred shaves, with or without pyramids.

Inspired by the possibilities of pyramid power, the Unity Church of Christianity in Houston, Texas, built itself a temple that is a small-scale version of the Great Pyramid, standing 75 feet (22.8 metres) high. Although the pyramid shape works well as a church, the minister, John D. Rankin, who experienced a vision calling for the Church to raise the structure, has warned against constructing pyramidal homes. He feels that the

psychic energy generated by such structures over long periods is likely to produce undesirable effects.

Others who have tested various aspects of pyramid power make a number of claims for what can happen within a model pyramid, whether it is closed in or has an open framework. They maintain that dry-cell batteries regenerate; water seems tastier; food keeps longer; seeds germinate faster; pets and houseplants are happier; crystals grow in unusual forms; children appear calmer; sleep is better; menstrual cramps diminish; meditation is more concentrated; mental acuity improves; the sex drive increases; dowsers using a pendulum, dowsing rods or a forked twig can sense the force field of the pyramid; natural healing processes may be aided; prayer becomes more effective; and all psychic phenomena are stronger.

These claims are made by people who accept the reality of pyramid power; others, more sceptical, might point out that dry-cell batteries, left to themselves, will in any case build up a higher voltage, and that assessments of changes in psychic phenomena involve subjective judgements that are difficult to substantiate. Bill Kerrell and Kathy Groggin, in their book *The guide to pyramid energy* (published in 1975), casually write:

Leave a cup of coffee under the pyramid for about twenty minutes. You'll find that the bitterness disappears and the flavour becomes mellow. Again this would seem to indicate a lowering of the acidity level; however we can find no pH meter readings [a measure of acidity] to prove this with coffee.

Alan Geffin, a London-based advocate of pyramid power, describes the Universe as made of energy and composed of geometric patterns. For him the pyramid is therefore a symbol of the life force. He has worked with every form of model pyramid, from the 6-inch (15-centimetre) cardboard version in the experimental kit produced by Pyramid Power of Santa Monica, California, to his own 6-foot (1.8-metre) meditation frame. He believes that scientists who reject pyramid power have closed minds.

One scientist who might have been upset by talk of pyramid power was Nobel prize-winner Luis Alvarez. He set up the Joint Pyramid Project, linking Egypt with the USA, which lasted from 1966 to 1970, at a cost of more than \$1 million. The group working on the project placed a detector of cosmic rays (which pass through solid matter) in the vault beneath Chephren's Pyramid, the second pyramid at Giza, and then, for 24 hours a day for more than a year, they recorded all the cosmic rays passing through the structure. The idea was that empty spaces in the pyramid would let through more cosmic rays than expected, and so any undiscovered secret chambers would reveal themselves.

When the scientists came to analyse the recordings, everything fell apart. The computer-plotted results vacillated wildly from day to day. One member of the group, Dr Amr Goneid of Ein Shams University, Cairo, confessed:

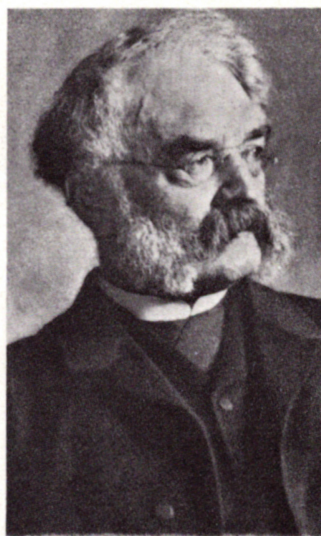
It defies all the known laws of science and electronics. This is scientifically impossible. Either the geometry of the pyramid is in substantial error, which would affect our readings, or there is a mystery which is beyond explanation. Call it what you will, occultism, the curse of the pharaohs, sorcery, or magic, there is some force that defies the laws of science at work in the pyramid.

However, it was decided that the real problem lay in the cosmic ray detector itself. Among other things, its operation depended on neon gas, and any contamination of the gas made it unreliable. Eventually, the group discarded the records of about a third of their million 'cosmic ray events' and announced categorically that no large chamber existed in the central part of the pyramid.

Perhaps the most exciting of all manifestations of pyramid power was that recorded by Werner von Siemens, founder of the German electrical firm Siemens and Halske (although 'exciting' is probably not the word



Above: 'pyramid power', it is claimed, can be concentrated inside an appropriately shaped frame



Above: Werner von Siemens, who demonstrated a high electrical concentration at the summit of the Great Pyramid

Further reading

Humphrey Evans, *The mystery of the Great Pyramid*, Marshall Cavendish 1979
 Thomas Hoving, *Tutankhamun: the untold story*, Penguin 1980
 Peter Tompkins, *Secrets of the Great Pyramid*, Penguin 1978
 Max Toth & Greg Nielsen, *Pyramid power*, Destiny (New York) 1976

the Arab guides caught up in the adventure would have used). While on his way to the Red Sea to lay a telegraph cable, Siemens broke his journey at Cairo long enough to visit Giza on 14 April 1859, taking with him 10 of his engineers. As they were climbing the Great Pyramid, hauled up by about 30 Arabs, a cold wind raised the desert dust into a white swirl. On the summit, copying one of the Arabs, Werner von Siemens pointed an outstretched finger in the air, producing a sharp singing sound and a prickling in the finger. He was just the man to recognise an electrical phenomenon (similar effects occur around any tall and pointed building under certain atmospheric conditions), and he and his companions tried some experiments.

Siemens wrapped a piece of damp paper around a full wine bottle, which had a metallically coated neck, transforming it into a Leyden jar, a kind of electrical accumulator, which became strongly charged when held high above his head. He found that he could produce loud, cracking sparks about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (1.2 centimetres) long.

At this point, the Arabs, who thought the engineers must be magicians, tried to drag them from the summit. The chief of the tribe took on von Siemens himself, who recorded:

I held the well-coated bottle in my right hand high above my head. I waited a moment and lowered the neck of the bottle slowly towards his nose. When I touched it I myself felt a strong concussion, to judge from which the sheik must have received a violent shock. He fell speechless to the ground, and several seconds elapsed, making me somewhat anxious, before he raised himself and sprang howling down the steps of the pyramid with gigantic leaps.

After that, how can pyramid power be denied?

The west Wales sightings form one of the most complex and richly documented UFO cases on record. But the facts were often markedly different from those that were reported. HILARY EVANS re-examines the evidence

THE REPORTS OF UFO activity in Dyfed in 1977 provide a dazzling variety of incidents and a small army of witnesses, as well as phenomena ranging from distant sightings to close encounters, with all manner of picturesque happenings on the side. Small wonder that the media moved into the area in force, and that innumerable newspaper and magazine articles and television programmes should be devoted to the astonishing events in this one small corner of Britain.

But in the end it was the sheer scale of this blaze of publicity that revealed the weaknesses of the accounts offered to the public. Had there been but one version, it might have been accepted as gospel, but there were several, and they all differed in detail and contradicted one another in interpretation. No reader with his wits about him can fail to notice the number of discrepancies and, once alerted, he starts to notice other defects – assumptions too easily made, questions not asked, awkward facts lightly passed over. Finally he realises that in some respects the investigation has been woefully incomplete,

One of the many reports of UFOs in Dyfed in 1977 was made by 13-year-old Deborah Swan, who claimed that while she and some friends were on a UFO hunt they were terrified by a 'brilliant gleaming silver' object, the size of a football, that was hovering in a field close by. But did the children really see a UFO? Or did they simply want to believe they had seen one because so many others seemed to have done so?

winter afternoon: 'It was a very dull day, but I did see something,' said one witness, which suggests an uncertain, indistinct sighting that would hardly permit the precise pin-pointing of the landing site.

However, it does not seem justifiable to accuse the children of deliberate hoaxing. The fact that, when their teachers did not believe them, they took the brave step of handing in a petition at the police station speaks well for their sincerity. Undoubtedly, they saw something that they could not identify. What that something was we may never know for certain, but it seems probable that the suggestion of the two canteen workers who saw an object at the same spot, that it was a vehicle associated with the sewage works located close by, is the correct one.

Why, then, did the children suppose that they were seeing a UFO? Here we move from physical to sociological considerations. Two days before, several schoolboys at Penarth, Cardiff, claimed to have seen a cigar-shaped UFO. The following day – the day before the Broad Haven sighting – the *Western Telegraph* reported that another cigar-shaped UFO had been seen at nearby Hubberston primary school, for between 10 and 15 minutes, by children playing football. There is no need to suppose that the Broad Haven children were consciously seeking to emulate

The truth about the Welsh triangle

while in others the facts have been distorted or exaggerated almost beyond recognition.

In the light of more objective investigation into the west Wales sightings it is possible to see just how much truth subsists in the accounts given to the public, and to reassess some of the events outlined in preceding articles.

The Pembrokeshire UFO 'flap' may be said to have started at Broad Haven primary school, and it is appropriate that reassessment should start with a visit to the site of the alleged sighting. Straight away we are in for a surprise. The reports hardly emphasise how densely the site is covered with bushes and trees, so that any sighting must have been largely screened. It would have been impossible for the children to have seen the UFO in its entirety, so the sketches that they drew the following Monday must be regarded as largely make-believe. Again, we find that the field is in a narrow valley, overlooked by a number of houses. It has always seemed improbable that a UFO should remain in a field in broad daylight for three hours and more – there is no precedent for such a sighting. The proposition becomes even more improbable in the light of the fact that its alleged location was within constant sight of a semi-circle of houses. It should also be recalled that the events all took place on a



the others, but it is evident that the idea of UFOs was very much in the air at the time and might have come naturally to the minds of schoolchildren confronted with an unfamiliar object. The boy who was scared that he might be 'disintegrated' by UFO entities – like the other witness who thought he could distinguish 'retro-rockets' on the side of a UFO – already had in his mind the raw materials from which an imaginary UFO could be constructed.

The Broad Haven story immediately stimulated the public imagination. The next week's *Western Telegraph* noted: 'Reporters, photographers and television cameramen arrived in a two-day procession to see the starstruck youngsters, who were only too willing to repeat their fantastic story.' Even those who did not believe that story were made aware that curious things were going on; while those who *were* ready to believe drew fresh encouragement from this flare-up of interest. Soon local investigator Randall Jones Pugh was telling reporters, 'The phone hasn't stopped ringing since the Broad Haven sightings. People are beginning to come forward now that they realise nobody is going to take the mickey out of them.'

How many of the sightings reported to Pugh and others in this way have any basis in fact it is probably now impossible to ascertain. But as one leafs through the files of the local newspaper, presumably read by a high proportion of the local populace, one is struck by the way in which the subject was kept simmering throughout the spring and summer of 1977. Week after week the correspondence columns included letters presenting views for or against. The reports were both serious and objective, never sensational and at the same time never mocking. This fact in itself would have been sufficient to create a favourable soil in which the false could be nurtured along with the true.

With the national media, on the other hand, it was a different matter. Absurd tales, heavy with exaggeration, were concocted by



Stack Rocks in St Bride's Bay, which allegedly attracted the attention of 'silvery' humanoids in October 1977. The figures were seen climbing on the rocks by Mrs Rose Granville (above), who claimed to have observed them through binoculars from the Haven Fort Hotel. However, the hotel is about 3 miles (5 kilometres) from the rocks and it is unlikely that she would have been able to make out much detail at this distance

way from the park, two of them turned back because 'it began to get scary.' The others went on, under fences, across a potato field, down a bank – and then, as Deborah later reported:

There was something in the field opposite out of the ordinary. I have never seen anything like it before in my life. . . . I thought it was my eyes playing a trick – but it wasn't. The most astonishing thing about it was the colour, which was a brilliant gleaming silver. The shape was like a round football, and also the movements. . . . It moved at all angles – backwards, forwards, left to right . . . as we moved, it moved as well. We then ran back as fast as we could. . . . We didn't hesitate to look back, but just kept running.

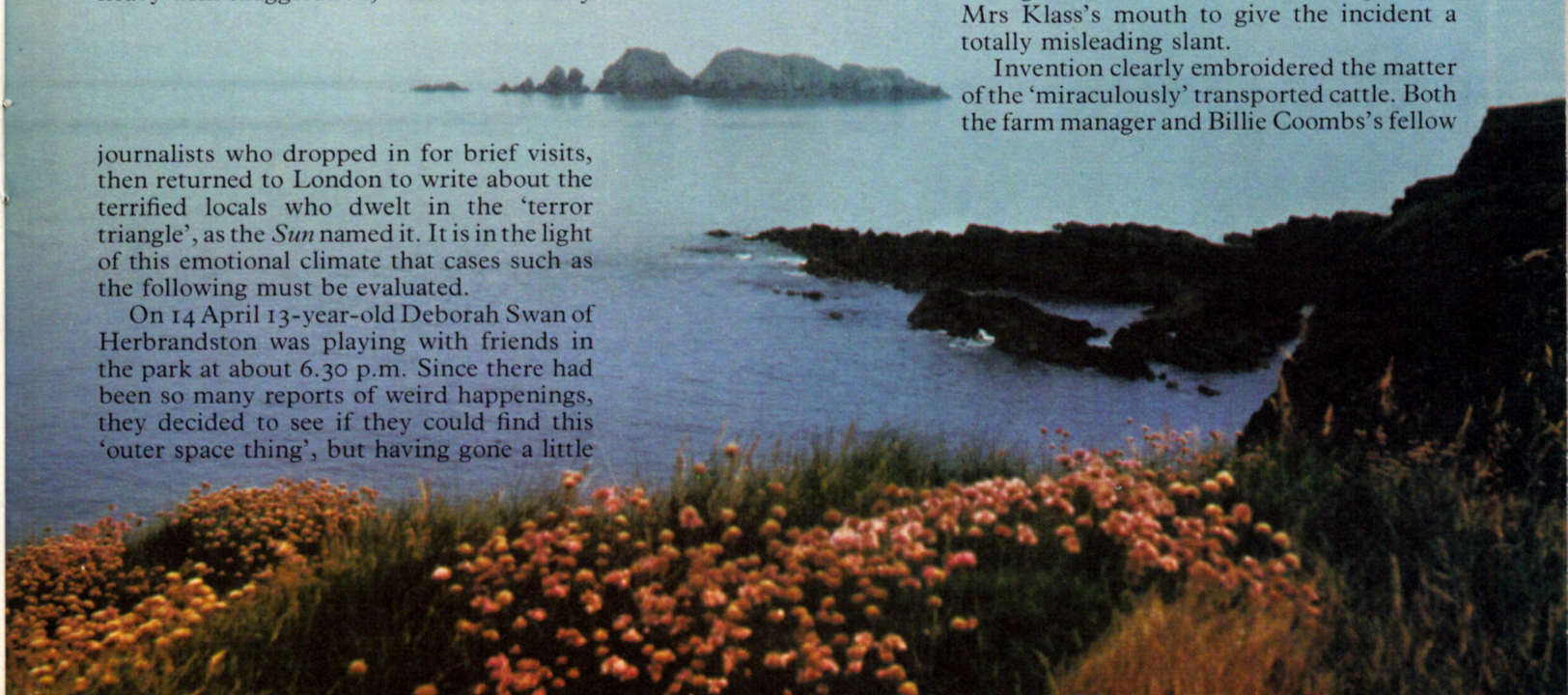
What did Deborah and her companions see? Was it really a UFO or just an hallucination? Was it a misperception? Was it pure imagination or deliberate fiction? One thing is certain: it is altogether without precedent for anyone to go looking for UFOs and to run across one within a few minutes. And yet Deborah's story was accepted literally at the time by all those who were supposed to be conducting an objective investigation into the facts.

It was the happenings at Ripperston Farm that were the most widely publicised of the west Wales sightings. How do they stand up to objective investigation? Right away, one is struck by the fact that the Coombs family had neighbours who lived not simply nearby but in a cottage that was actually joined to their own. Throughout the period of the alleged incidents Brian and Caroline Klass were living right next door, working alongside Billie Coombs. Yet it is a fact, however hard to believe, that not one single reporter or investigator bothered to ask the Klasses for their view of the matter. On the occasion of the only event in which they were directly involved, the sinister visit of the two 'foreigners', false statements were put into Mrs Klass's mouth to give the incident a totally misleading slant.

Invention clearly embroidered the matter of the 'miraculously' transported cattle. Both the farm manager and Billie Coombs's fellow

journalists who dropped in for brief visits, then returned to London to write about the terrified locals who dwelt in the 'terror triangle', as the *Sun* named it. It is in the light of this emotional climate that cases such as the following must be evaluated.

On 14 April 13-year-old Deborah Swan of Herbrandston was playing with friends in the park at about 6.30 p.m. Since there had been so many reports of weird happenings, they decided to see if they could find this 'outer space thing', but having gone a little



worker testify that the Ripperston cattle were continually getting loose and finding their way on to neighbouring farms. Could they get past the cottages without anyone hearing? Certainly, declares Billie Coombs's neighbour. When there was a wind blowing they wouldn't hear a thing, particularly if the television or radio were on.

And there are other happenings at Ripperston that, looked at objectively, turn out to be less than inexplicable. There is the mysterious force that allegedly acted on mechanical objects, destroying five cars in the course of a year. Those who knew Mr Coombs have pointed out that a cowman doesn't have the resources to buy that many new cars. What he did was to purchase more or less condemned cars from a scrap yard, get them working as best he could and drive them until they finally fell to pieces. A similar explanation accounts for the high accident rate among the family's television sets. As for the abnormally high electricity bill, a neighbour alleges that the Coombs family were forever leaving the central heating fully on while doors and windows were open.

One of the most sensational incidents was the appearance, on the night of 22 April, of a mysterious entity at the Coombs's sitting-room window. On this occasion there is no doubt that something really did happen; the farm manager whom Mr Coombs telephoned in the middle of the night was convinced that he was genuinely frightened. But by what?

Some time earlier two local men were passing the Haven Fort Hotel, in whose

At the time of Mrs Granville's sighting on Stack Rocks, members of the Coombs family were driving home to Ripperston Farm when they saw a silver, disc-shaped UFO circle the rocks, then disappear into them as if through sliding doors. A telephone call from Mrs Granville prompted Pauline Coombs and some of the children to go to the cliff top to look at Stack Rocks, and they too claimed to see figures climbing there. Subsequent investigation of the rocks, however, revealed no evidence of UFO or humanoids

grounds the proprietor had recently reported seeing a UFO and a couple of entities. On an impulse, they decided to play a trick on her. They proceeded to tramp around the building in a sinister fashion, using a torch to enhance the effect. It seems probable that it was these same jokers who were later responsible for the Coombs 'entity'. Although the identity of the jokers is widely suspected, they have not openly admitted their complicity, so the explanation must remain conjecture only. However, the hoax explanation is generally accepted in the area today.

Space does not permit an item-by-item exposure of similar errors and exaggerations, but the sensational Stack Rocks sighting must be mentioned. Unfortunately, the discrepancies between the various reported accounts of this incident are even more glaring than usual, so it is impossible to say quite what happened or in what sequence. What is supposed to have occurred is roughly as follows.

A flash in the sky

Early one evening in October Pauline Coombs was driving to Ripperston with her mother and some of the children when her mother saw a disc-shaped UFO fly overhead towards Stack Rocks, which stand out at sea some distance from the mainland. The UFO circled the rocks, then dived into them through what appeared to be sliding doors.

Alarmed, they continued on their way. Hardly had they arrived home than the telephone rang. Mrs Granville, of the Haven Fort Hotel, had seen a flash in the sky, which had prompted her to fetch her binoculars to examine Stack Rocks (which, incidentally, were her property). She had seen figures climbing about on the rocks, and wondered if Mrs Coombs had seen any such thing? Mrs Coombs immediately set off from the farm towards the cliff, accompanied by some of the children, to obtain a better view.

According to the reports, they came back confirming Mrs Granville's sighting. However, closer investigation reveals that what happened was that on their return from the cliffs some of the children ran on ahead of their mother. Caroline Klass, their neighbour, asked the boy Keiron if they had seen anything, to which he replied, no, of course they hadn't. But when Mrs Coombs arrived she insisted that they had indeed seen entities clambering about the rocks on what appeared to be stairs.

What are we to make of this? Again, a visit to the site certainly helps. The Haven Fort Hotel is some 3 miles (5 kilometres) from Stack Rocks, which makes it improbable that any movement could be seen in detail, particularly as it was evening, and the side of the rocks facing the mainland was in shadow. Additionally, the side facing the hotel is at an angle of 90° from Mrs Coombs's viewpoint, so it is unlikely that she would be able to see the same thing. Mrs Granville's explanation





for her alarm at the flash and her subsequent inspection of the rocks is not convincing, for the sky above St Bride's Bay is continually flown over by jets from the RAF base at nearby Brawdy, Stack Rocks being a mark in the flight path of aircraft approaching the airfield. Flashes in the sky over Stack Rocks must occur many times every day.

One notes, too, that the Coombs's first sighting must have been made from a moving car that was travelling along a bumpy, unsurfaced road, from which the rocks can be glimpsed only intermittently. At that point they must have been about 2 miles (3 kilometres) away. A BBC investigator visited the rocks to see if there was anything that might have given rise to the sighting. He found nothing. It is noteworthy, though, that from the approximate angle at which the Coombs family must have seen the disc dive into the rocks, there are two large rock slabs, separated by a darker area, that could conceivably lend themselves to interpretation as a pair of sliding doors.

Finally, what value can be placed on Pauline Coombs as a witness? It has been suggested that she might have been a natural psychic, but it is also possible that she was either very suggestible or highly imaginative. Some time after the events of 1977, and shortly after a television programme featuring a notable UFO contactee, Mrs Coombs confided to Caroline Klass that she, too, had been taken for a trip in an alien spaceship.

The investigation that has led to the disclosures made here was undertaken specifically for *The Unexplained*, not with the intention of debunking the reports but simply in order to establish the real facts. The unearthing of such a farrago of exaggeration and omission, of gratuitous distortion and outright falsehood, was as unexpected as



Above: Josephine Hewison, who reported seeing a huge object 'like a squashed jelly mould' in a field at Lower Broadmoor Farm (top). Researchers were convinced by her straightforward and objective account of the sighting, and there seems to be little reason to doubt that she did indeed see something paranormal

Further reading

Clive Harold, *The uninvited*, Star 1979
 Peter Paget, *The Welsh triangle*, Panther 1979
 Randall Jones Pugh and F. W. Holiday, *The Dyfed enigma*, Faber 1979

it was dismaying. Inevitably, one is forced to ask whether there is any substance whatever in the west Wales flap of 1977.

Fortunately, not all the findings were as disillusioning. There seems no reason to doubt that a good many of the witnesses who submitted their experiences to the press or to the British UFO Research Association representative, Randall Jones Pugh, did so in good faith and were reporting events that may well have been genuine UFO sightings. Of all these cases, one must stand for the rest.

A little before 8 a.m. on Saturday, 26 March, Josephine Hewison of Lower Broadmoor Farm, whose husband Richard manages the farm that includes Ripperston, was standing at her bedroom window. In a field just beyond the drive that circles around the front of the house she saw a massive object some 50 feet (15 metres) wide, large enough to hide, almost completely, a greenhouse that stood behind it. It had a round, three-tiered shape – a broad base, then a rounded ridge with a dome above. The whole thing, in Mrs Hewison's words, was 'rather like a squashed jelly mould'. It was smooth, bulbous, aluminium-coloured. There was no sound, no indication of activity. It was full daylight but overcast, which invalidates the theory that she might have been dazzled by sunlight reflected from the greenhouse.

She gazed at it for about two minutes, then realised that she ought to tell somebody else. She went to wake up her children, but when she looked out of the window again, the object had vanished.

Curious and unforgettable

There is no way to confirm or refute Josephine Hewison's testimony. But a visit to the site makes it clear that there is nothing there that she could have misinterpreted. Either she saw something real or she was hallucinating – and there seems no reason to suppose that she was hallucinating. Today her view of the incident is a measured, objective one. She knows that she saw something that morning, and she continues to think it likely that she saw something 'real'. Though some reporters described her as 'terrified', what she saw didn't frighten her at all. It was simply a curious and an unforgettable experience.

The story of the west Wales flap is a sad revelation of human nature. Some of those involved emerge as simple-minded, only too ready to believe what they are told without questioning. Others, though claiming to be objective investigators, have shown themselves to be incompetent or prejudiced. Some who have proffered evidence are to be seen as simply unreliable, others may be considered fraudulent. Just a few people, like Josephine Hewison, seem to have had genuinely paranormal experiences. But because of the way in which the affair was treated, the truth has been buried beneath every kind of error and evasion, fiction and fraud.



The 'alchemical fireplace' (below), now in the Château de Terre Neuve (left) in Vendée. In *Les demeures philosophales*, Fulcanelli translates the Latin motto *nascendo quotidie morimur* inscribed above the fireplace as 'by being born, we die daily', and points out that this alludes to certain aspects of the alchemical process as well as the spiritual changes they allegedly induce

Transformation of an alchemist

At their final meeting in 1954, Canseliet reported that his master Fulcanelli seemed youthful – although he must have been over 100 years old. Had he found the secret of eternal life? KENNETH RAYNER JOHNSON investigates

IN FRANCE THE NAME of Fulcanelli quickly found popular acceptance as the traditional pseudonym of an alchemical Master. Go to the 16th-century Château de Terre-Neuve, Vendée, even today, and there you will be shown an ornately decorated 'alchemical fireplace' – and the French guide will tell you it is the one of which Fulcanelli wrote in *Les demeures philosophales*, without even bothering to explain who Fulcanelli was . . . or is.

But to English-speaking students of occultism and alchemy, it was not until 1963 that the publication of Louis Pauwels's and Jacques Bergier's best-seller *The dawn of magic* in English ensured that Fulcanelli and his works came to be more widely known. And it was a further eight years before Fulcanelli's first masterpiece, *Le mystère des cathédrales*, was translated into English.

Each of these books provided astounding new information about Fulcanelli. The latter, for example, contained the bold assertion by Fulcanelli's disciple Eugène Canseliet that the Master had given him a minute quantity of the alchemical 'powder of projection' in 1922 – and permitted him to transmute 4 ounces (100 grams) of lead into gold. The experiment, Canseliet told Walter

Below: the noted French atomic physicist André Helbronner. In 1937 his research assistant Jacques Bergier was warned of the implications of manipulating nuclear energy by a mysterious stranger – whom he identified as Fulcanelli



Lang, who wrote the book's introduction, took place in the unlikely setting of a gas-works at Sarcelles before two witnesses: the artist Jean-Julien Champagne and a young chemist named Gaston Sauvage.

Furthermore, in a letter to Lang, Canseliet maintained that, when he had last worked with Fulcanelli, 'The Master was already a very old man but he carried his eighty years lightly. Thirty years later, I was to see him again . . . and he appeared to be a man of fifty. That is to say, he appeared to be no older than I was myself.'

Canseliet, aged 80 in 1981, has subsequently asserted that he has, on more than one occasion, kept a secret rendezvous with his Master – and that Fulcanelli is still very much alive.

Another possible appearance of the Master was reported by Pauwels and Bergier in their book. Bergier claimed that in June 1937 – eight years before the first atom-bomb test in New Mexico – he was approached by an impressive but mysterious stranger. The man asked Bergier to pass on a message to the noted physicist André Helbronner, for whom he was then working. He said he felt it his duty to warn orthodox scientists, now

Louis Pauwels (right) and Jacques Bergier (far right), whose best-selling *The dawn of magic*, published in 1963, brought the first news of Fulcanelli to English-speaking readers



that they were on the brink of being able to manipulate nuclear energy, of the danger of this new discovery. The alchemists of bygone times – and previous civilisations that had destroyed themselves – had obtained such secret knowledge. The stranger said he held out no hope that his warning would be heeded, but nonetheless felt obliged to issue it. Bergier remained convinced, right up to his death in November 1978, that the enigmatic stranger was Fulcanelli.

As a result of Bergier's experience, the American Office for Strategic Services, forerunner of the CIA, made a search for Fulcanelli when the Second World War ended in 1945. They were anxious to round up anyone who had prior knowledge of nuclear physics, to prevent their defection to hostile powers. But Fulcanelli could not be found.

Alchemy and the atom bomb

There is, however, one flaw in Bergier's story. According to his own account, the man who visited him, while speaking apparently knowledgeably about the manipulation of nuclear energy, mentioned the element plutonium. Yet this element was not isolated until February 1941, by the physicist Glenn T. Seaborg, at Berkeley, California. Furthermore, it was not actually named plutonium until March 1942 – five years after Bergier's alleged encounter. In fact, Element 94, as it was previously called, was almost dubbed 'plutium' – but Seaborg, as its discoverer, decided plutonium rolled more easily off the tongue.

But the fact remains that Bergier claimed that *someone* highly knowledgeable visited him at the Paris Gas Board laboratory in 1937. And he was said to have a photographic memory.

There is one further account that tells of a transmutation performed by Fulcanelli himself. It comes from a modern alchemist, now

Glenn T. Seaborg, who discovered the element plutonium in 1941. Bergier claimed that the stranger who visited him in 1937 mentioned plutonium by name – and yet this event occurred four years before the element was isolated, and five years before it was actually called plutonium



operating from Salt Lake City, Utah. He is Frater Albertus Spagyricus, born Albert Riedel in Dresden, Germany, in 1911. A former interior decorator, Frater Albertus now heads the flourishing Paracelsus College (Utah Institute of Parachemistry), formed originally as the Paracelsus Research Society in 1960. The college operates regular seminars on alchemical subjects at its headquarters and seeks to 'bring alchemy out of the Dark Ages'.

In his book *The alchemist of the Rocky Mountains* (1975), Frater Albertus claims that Fulcanelli transmuted half a pound (200 grams) of lead into gold and 4 ounces (100 grams) of silver into uranium in 1937 – the same year, it will be noted, as Bergier's meeting with the mysterious stranger. The experiment, according to Albertus, took place at the Castel de Leré, near Bourges, and was witnessed by the castle's owner, Pierre de Lesseps, along with two unnamed physicists, a chemist and geologist.

When Fulcanelli added an 'unknown substance' to the half-pound of molten lead, says Albertus, it was transmuted into the same weight in gold. Afterwards, Fulcanelli did the same with the silver, producing a like amount of uranium.

Asked what the unknown substance was, Fulcanelli 'would only mention offhandedly that it was derived from ferrous pyrite (fool's gold), a ferrous sulphide FeS_2 '.

The present author wrote to Frater Albertus asking for his sources of information. But an assistant politely answered that Frater Albertus was unfortunately too busy teaching and attending to his lecture programme to be able to answer personally and in detail.

According to Frater Albertus, however, it was after the 1937 transmutation that Fulcanelli disappeared.

The only other person who has claimed to have contacted Fulcanelli in more recent

The perfect being



The aim of alchemists in attempting to complete the Great Work is not merely to enable them to change base metals into gold, or even to achieve eternal youth. For alchemists believe that every stage in the alchemical process is accompanied by a spiritual change in the person conducting the work.

The secret of the alchemical art is said to be contained in the aphoristic principle *solve et coagula*, 'dissolve and combine'. This is a fair description of the physical aspect of the alchemical process: at each stage, the various characteristics of a substance are stripped away, and a new, nobler substance is built up. In the spiritual aspect, this means a 'death' followed by a 'rebirth' into a better, purer life – a concept familiar in many religions; St Paul, for instance, exhorts the faithful to 'die to sin and live to righteousness'.

In the final stage of the Great Work, 'the King is reunited in the Fire of Love with his blessed Queen' – and the Alchemist becomes the perfect being, the Divine Androgyne, the perfect conjunction of man and woman.

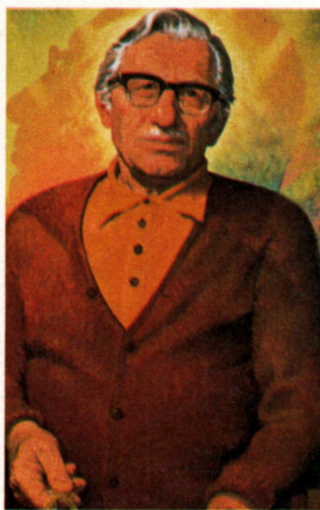
times is his faithful pupil Canseliet. He has asserted that he met his Master in Spain in 1954 in highly unusual circumstances.

If Fulcanelli was, as Canseliet maintains, 80 when last they worked together in the late 1920s, it would make the Master Alchemist between 100 and 110 years old by the time of the Spanish meeting. Confirmation that Canseliet did indeed go to Spain that year was obtained by the late Gerard Heym, founder member of the Society for the Study of Alchemy and Early Chemistry and editor of *Ambix*, its journal. Heym, who was acclaimed by many as Europe's foremost occult scholar of his day, made friends with Canseliet's daughter and through her managed to take a look at his passport. It carried a Spanish entry-visa stamp for 1954.

But how Canseliet received the summons to Spain and what actually went on there is highly mysterious. Heym told the occultist Walter Lang that he gained the impression that a message was received in some paranormal way, possibly through clairvoyance. And a close friend of Canseliet, who was still engaged in alchemical research in 1981 and must remain anonymous, told the present writer: 'He has told me in detail how he met Fulcanelli in Spain – in another dimension, as it were, or rather at a point where such meetings are possible.'

Further enquiries elicited the information that Canseliet went to Seville and was met and taken by a long, circuitous route to a large mountain château. It turned out to be a secret colony of alchemists – and it was here that Canseliet had once again met his former

Frater Albertus Spagyricus, director of Paracelsus College, the Utah Institute of Parachemistry. He claims that in 1937, before three witnesses, Fulcanelli performed transmutations of lead into gold, and silver into uranium



Master in such mysterious circumstances.

But, even more peculiar to those not familiar with alchemical philosophy and its aura of mysticism, Fulcanelli appeared to have undergone a curious form of transformation. He seemed androgynous – to have characteristics of both men and women.

Canseliet has told sources close to him – he does not receive casual visitors and cannot deal with his massive mail – that Fulcanelli actually had the appearance of a woman. This kind of physical change has been reported in obscure pockets of alchemical literature as one of the side effects of taking the Elixir of Life. If the elixir is successful, the subject is said to lose all his hair, teeth and nails, then regrow them and take on younger, smoother, almost asexual facial features.

According to Gerard Heym, Canseliet returned home with only vague recollections of his experiences in Spain – almost as if, said Heym, he had been subjected to some form of hypnosis, designed to make him forget the details of what he had seen and been told.

Curiously enough, Canseliet has admitted his own failure to perfect the Third Degree of the Great Work – the manufacture of the Stone and Elixir. And, apart from being a respected author and savant on the alchemical art, he seems to have gained little personal benefit – financially or otherwise – from his long association with the mysterious Fulcanelli.

What are the alchemical implications of the Divine Androgyne? See page 918

Secrets of our mysterious past and hidden future revealed to readers of

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Foreword by Colin Wilson

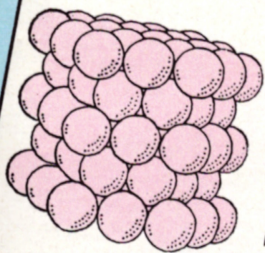


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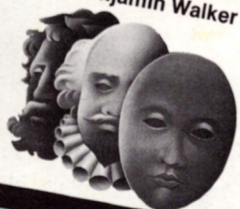
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